Videsh Ltd. (OVL), a 100% subsidiary of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC), is actively persuing opportunities in equity oil and gas abroad in various countries, including Kazakhstan.

LNG terminal at Kochi

717. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to set up LNG terminal project in Kochi, Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the above proposal is approved by the competent authority; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Petronet LNG Limited, a Joint Venture of four oil PSUs namely Gas Authority of India Ltd., Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd., and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. are setting up 2.5 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) capacity Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal at Kochi in Kerala. Most of the pre-project activities, including pre-qualification of Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) bidders for lumpsum turnkey contract have been completed and statutory clearances, except environment clearance, have been obtained.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Exploration of CBM in West Bengal

718. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) gas exploration in West Bengal in both public and private sector; and

(b) the expected time by which CBM would be available for commercial utilisation from the above on-going explorations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Systematic evaluation Coal Bed Methane (CBM) began in Durgapur depression in the

Southern part of Raniganj basin in 1995, when the first R&D well DU-1 (DUAA) was drilled by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) exclusively for evaluating the CBM potential of the area. The second CBM well DU-2 (DUAB) was also drilled by ONGC in the same basin. Subsequently, ONGC drilled seven slim holes for CBM in the Northern part of Raniganj coalfield. Additionally, Government has signed contracts for two CBM blocks in the State of West Bengal to public and private companies for exploration and production of CBM. The details of these blocks are as follows:—

(i) Raniganj South Block comprising 210 square kilometer area contract for which has been signed in 2001 with M/s Great Eastern Energy Corporation Ltd. Drilling of two coreholes and one pilot well has been completed. The first phase of exploration as per contract is of three years duration.

(ii) Raniganj East Block comprising 500 square kilometer area contract for which has been signed recently with M/s Essar Oil. The first phase of exploration as per contract is of three years duration.

(b) Commercial production of CBM from the blocks may be available after 5-6 years depending upon the success to test wells and establishment of commercial quantities of CBM.

Octane testing centres in Gujarat

719. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Gujarat has requested financial assistance for establishment of stationery as well as mobile Octane Testing Centres in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the request has been accepted by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government of Gujarat has requested for financial assistance for establishment of an independent laboratory to be run by Consumer Education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad to check the adulteration of petroleum products in the State. The total cost of setting up of the laboratory